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# THE CANDLE AND THE CAT

MARY F LEONARD

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# The Candle and the Cat

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NEW YORK.

"IT IS LIKE A SNOWSTORM," EXCLAIMED CARO, TAKING HER TURN AT JUMPING. See page 40.

# The Candle and the Cat

By

Mary T. Leonard

Author of
"Half a Dozen
Thinking Caps"

New York
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*To the memory of*

*TROLLEY*

*This little story is dedicated*

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# THE CANDLE AND THE CAT

## CHAPTER I

### CARO AND TROLLEY

AT the entrance to the driveway leading to the residence occupied by the President of the Theological Seminary were two flat-topped stone pillars, and upon one of these on a certain bright September day, Trolley sat sunning himself.

His handsome coat, shading from a delicate fawn color to darkest brown, glistened like satin; his paws were tucked comfortably away beneath him, his long tail hung down behind, and his golden eyes were almost closed; only the occasional movement of his small aristocratic ears showed him to be awake.

When Caro came dancing down from the house he turned his head for a moment and watched her sleepily till she was safely on top of the other pillar, where she seated herself Turk-

fashion, her blue ruffles spread out carefully, for Aunt Charlotte had cautioned her not to rumple them. Caro had also been told not to go out without her hat, so it dangled by its elastic from her arm, while the sun shone down without hindrance upon the fair little face with its smiling blue eyes, and its crown of short brown curls.

"Trolley," she announced presently, "here comes the Professor of something that begins with 'Ex,'—I never can remember, it is such a funny word. It sounds like the book in the Bible where the Commandments are."

Dr. Wells, the dignified Professor of New Testament Exegesis unbent a little at sight of the novel ornaments on the president's gate-posts. "Why Miss Caro, you must have wings!" he said, smiling up at her.

"Why no, I haven't; and neither has Trolley. He just jumps, but I have to climb. You see that ledge there?—and this place—?"

"Yes, my dear, that will do. Aren't you afraid you will fall?" the professor exclaimed uneasily, as Caro leaned over to point out her way of ascent. "I really think you had better get down."

"But it is very nice up here; you can see so much," the little girl assured him serenely, and Dr. Wells went his way wondering if he ought not to go up to the house and tell someone of her dangerous position.

"I am not a bit afraid I'll fall. There's not the least danger; is there Trolley?" Caro continued.

Trolley opened his eyes, yawned scornfully and closed them again.

"There is one thing I am afraid of—at least I don't like it, and that is the *dark*. I s'pose you don't mind it 'cause you can see—I shouldn't either if I could see in the dark. Aunt Charlotte says I mustn't have a light to go to sleep by, and I love a light,—I just *love* it!" Caro's eyes had grown sorrowful and her voice had in it the sound of tears.

On the porch of the house back among the trees Aunt Charlotte had waylaid the president. "I don't know what to do with Caro, Charles. She isn't exactly naughty,—and yet you couldn't say she was good either—"

"You surprise me," he replied, as his sister hesitated. "She impresses me as a decided character for one so young."

"Decided! I should say so! You know—" Aunt Charlotte continued, "Elinor put her in my charge to be dealt with as seemed to me best, and I did think after bringing up your five that I knew something about it, but my hand has lost its cunning. You know I have never allowed a child a light to go to sleep by, but Caro insists upon having one, and lies awake and cries without it. What am I to do? Let her cry?"

"Oh no, I shouldn't do that!" answered her brother hastily, gazing into his hat as if he hoped to find there some solution of the problem. "Suppose you let me consider the matter," he added, as the striking of the hall clock reminded him of his engagement; "I'll talk to her."

"Much good it will do," said Aunt Charlotte.

With a book under his arm Dr. Barrows started out, so absorbed in thought of his small granddaughter that he passed through the gate without seeing her till she called, "Goodby grandpa!"

"Why Caro! Aren't you afraid you will fall?"

Caro shook her curls vigorously, and then leaning forward she said plaintively, "Grandpa —please don't let Aunt Charlotte make me sleep in the dark."

"I fear you are a foolish little girl," replied the president meaning to look stern, but succeeding only in smiling fondly at the witch on the pillar, who appropriated the smile and ignored the words.

"You know God made the darkness, Caro," he continued, conscious that the remark was not quite original.

"Yes—" unwillingly—then "but grandpa, He put stars in *His* dark!"

As Dr. Barrows walked down the street he reflected that he should have but a divided mind to give to seminary matters, if the present state of affairs continued, and the seminary needed his close attention just now.

It was two weeks since his granddaughter had arrived to spend several months in his home while her father and mother were traveling. "I am afraid we have spoiled her a little," his daughter Elinor wrote, "and hard as it is for me to give her up I feel sure it will be good for her to be in Aunt Charlotte's hands

for a time. I know you will love her and forgive her little failings, as you always did those of—

"Your devoted daughter."

Love her! he was fairly bewitched by her. He had thought a child in the house after so many years of quiet might be annoying, but on the contrary he would have liked to have her always with him.

Aunt Charlotte was ready and anxious to do anything and everything for her dear Elinor's child, but somehow her theories which had worked so well with her brother's children did not seem to fit the next generation.

The truth was that in her southern home Caro had been under a very different rule. Mammy 'Riah who had nursed her father before her, had, to use her own words "Taught her pretty manners," and petted and scolded and worshipped her. The result puzzled Aunt Charlotte and delighted her brother.

"I can't explain it," he said, "but the child has that something,—her grandmother had it—" and here the president fell to musing over

those far-away days when he had fallen in love with a pretty southern girl.

"Please don't let her make me sleep in the dark:"—Caro's grandfather felt positively chivalrous in his determination to protect her—from what? His own dear sister in whose wisdom and devotion he had rested all these years!

## CHAPTER II

### THE SILVER CANDLESTICK

It is not for a moment to be supposed that Trolley appeared in the first chapter simply because he was picturesque. He was undoubtedly handsome, and had a remarkable gift for elegant attitudes. He would pose as dignity and wisdom personified in the president's arm chair, or stretch himself in careless grace on Aunt Charlotte's choicest divan, and had even been known to make a mantel ornament of himself in an aspiring mood.

But above all else Trolley had a mind of his own. For example he had chosen his home. He began life at the Graysons' on Grayson avenue, but as soon as he was old enough to choose for himself he took up his abode with the President of the Seminary.

Aunt Charlotte did not particularly care for cats, and furthermore did not covet anything that was her neighbor's, so again and again

Trolley was sent back, all to no purpose, and at length he was allowed to have his way.

This was just at the time when the Graysons and some others were bringing suit to prevent the laying of a trolley line on the avenue, and between the progressive people who wished more rapid transportation than the stage which passed back and forth once an hour, and the old-fashioned residents who feared to have the beauty of their street destroyed, and their quiet disturbed by clanging bells and buzzing wheels, feeling had grown exceedingly bitter.

Dr. Barrows himself had no special interest in the matter, but some members of his family were warm supporters of the railway, and when the suit was decided in its favor one of his nephews named the cat in honor of the event.

As Trolley he was known from that hour, and he grew so large and handsome that even Aunt Charlotte came to take pride in him. He was amiable in disposition, but distant in manner to all except Caro, who had won his heart as he had won hers, at first sight.

He forgot his dignity and raced with her in the garden like a frolicsome kitten, when she was tired he allowed himself to be made a pil-

low of, and to all her confidences he listened with a sympathetic purr. In fact he did all he could to keep her from being homesick.

There were of course times when his own affairs demanded his attention. Bobby Brown a yellow cat who lived two doors away needed an occasional setting down for instance, and other matters of this kind sometimes kept him away for a day. It was on one of these occasions that Caro quite tired out with searching for him sat down on the doorstep and began to miss mamma and the boys—'just dreadfully.'

"I am going to do some shopping; do you want to come?" asked her grandfather's voice behind her.

The clouds flew from her face in a minute, for shopping with grandfather always meant something interesting, if only a glass of ice cream soda.

As they walked down town together, Caro chattered away without a pause.

"Are you going to buy something for me, grandpa?" she asked as they entered a large grocery.

"I want to see some wax candles in different

colors," Dr. Barrows said to the clerk who came forward.

"Why that sounds like Christmas or a birthday," exclaimed Caro.

But the candles brought out were too large for Christmas trees, or cakes. They were of all colors, and some were plain, others fluted.

"What color do you prefer, Caro?" her grandfather asked.

It was difficult to decide among so many pretty ones, and she hung over them with a finger on her lip and an expression of great earnestness on her face.

"The pink is lovely—and so is the blue, only not quite so pretty,—and the green, and—yes I like the violet too—"

"We'll have to take one of each, I see," said the president; and this greatly simplified the matter. Six candles were selected—blue, pink, green, red, violet and yellow, and these were done up in a white paper parcel and handed to Caro.

"Now grandpa, what are we going to do with them?" she asked when they were on the street again.

"That is a secret."

Caro gave a little jump of excitement. "I love secrets;" "Please tell me what it is."

"Then it wouldn't be a secret any longer."

"But—two people can know a secret, and I promise truly, bluely, I'll not tell."

"I'll see about it when we get home," her grandfather replied, thereby causing her to be in such a flutter of anticipation that as he told her, he might as well have tried to keep step with a yellow butterfly.

When at last they reached the study, Caro looked on with deep interest while her grandfather unlocked a cabinet and took from it a small silver candlestick of beautiful design.

"How pretty! Is it to put the candles in?"

Dr. Barrows glanced up at the portrait of a sweet-faced young woman in an old-fashioned gown, as he replied.

"This candlestick belonged to your grandmother, Caro, when she was a little girl, and now I am going to give it to another little girl who has her name, and who sometimes reminds me of her. You are to put one of the candles in it and put it on your dressing table, and when the gas is out after you go to bed you can

have a little candle-light to keep you from being lonely."

"You are the dearest, sweetest, goodest grandpa in the world!" Caro exclaimed with a ferocious hug. "The dear little candlestick! I'll never be lonesome any more."

Aunt Charlotte shook her head and called it a compromise, when the plan was explained to her, but made no real objection to it.

There was a faculty meeting that evening in the president's study, and two of the members had arrived and were talking with their host when a shrill voice was heard crying: "Go away Jane, I *will* call him! O grandpa!"

Dr. Barrows rose hastily and left the room, saying: "Excuse me gentlemen, my little granddaughter is calling me."

From the hall he had a vision of Caro—her small red slippers peeping out from her long white gown, her curly head looking over the stair rail. Behind her was Jane, the upstairs maid whispering sternly, "Come back Caro this minute, you are a naughty girl!"

"I just want you to see my candle lighted, grandpa," Caro said hopping down three steps to meet him, and taking his hand while Jane

retired shaking her head. She stood in great awe of the president, and in her eyes a faculty meeting was almost as sacred as a church service.

"You can turn the gas out, grandpa," Caro said, as after leading the way into her room, she merrily kicked off the red slippers and bounded into the middle of the bed.

From the door Jane saw the president laughing as he stooped to kiss the saucy face.

Caro snuggled down beneath the cover and when the gas was turned out, from the dressing table came the clear, soft light of the candle.

"It is my little candle-star, grandpa, and I don't mind the dark now, 'cause I can see it, and it is soft and nice."

"You are a funny child, Caro," her grandfather said, stroking her hair. "Suppose you try to be a little candle yourself."

"Why, how could I?" Caro sat up much interested.

"We'll talk about it to-morrow; they are waiting for me in the study, I must go."

"Well I think I'll be a pink one," remarked Caro meditatively, and Dr. Barrows went down stairs with a smile on his lips.

# CHAPTER III

## THE GATE IN THE ORCHARD

CARO was in great haste to tell Marjorie about her candle, and when she went skipping around the corner next morning she met Marjorie skipping in her direction.

"Why I was coming to see *you*," they both exclaimed.

Marjorie's father was a younger brother of Caro's grandfather, and their home was not far from the seminary. The little girls had already become good friends, but as Marjorie had been out of town with her mother they had not seen each other for several days.

"You come to my house, Caro, for I have something to show you," her cousin said.

"Well, let's go to the orchard then," Caro suggested.

One of the many pleasant things about Charmington was that it combined the delights of city and country. Down on Main street

there were stores large enough to supply all reasonable desires, and yet five minutes' walk in any direction brought you to the region of wide lawns and forest trees; and back of some of the pretty dwellings were orchards and gardens in which you could easily forget there was a town anywhere about. So it was in the Barrows orchard, for years a favorite playground for the children of the family.

Marjorie had some paper dolls and a new book to show Caro, and these they carried with them.

"Let's run, so Tom won't see us and want to come," she said.

Little Tom Turner who lived next door, was in her opinion only useful as a playmate when she had no one else, or to make up the necessary number in some game, usually it was more fun to run away from him. So they raced through the long grass, brown curls and flaxen braids bobbing up and down in their haste.

At the extreme end of the orchard there was a large flat stone under a pear tree, and here they sat down to get breath and look at the dolls and the book.

Marjorie had a great deal to tell about her

visit, and as she listened Caro's eyes presently made a discovery. "Why there's a gate! where does it go?" she asked.

The boundary line of the Barrows' grounds was marked by a rough stone wall, against which grew currant and gooseberry bushes, and almost hidden by these she noticed now for the first time a gate.

"Why Caro I'll tell you, the people who live over there aren't nice at all. They got mad at papa because of the trolley line, and they won't give any money to the seminary because they are mad at Uncle Charles too."

Persons who could be angry at her grandfather certainly could not be nice, Caro thought. "But what was the gate for?" she asked.

"A long time ago when Sister Alice and Brother Charlie were little they used to play with the Graysons."

"Oh, are there children there?"

"No, indeed; that was a long time ago; but Caro—" Marjorie's voice sank to a whisper—"there's a man over there who has something the matter with him. He can't walk, and a servant pushes him around in a chair. Nobody ever sees him, but one day I peeped over

the fence and there he was, all wrapped up and —dear! but I was scared!"

"He couldn't hurt you, could he?"

"No—I suppose not, but he might say something to me."

"Well that wouldn't hurt. I'd like to see him," said Caro.

All this was so interesting she had come near forgetting her candle. Now she thought of it and told Marjorie about it. "Just think," she added, "my own grandmother's candlestick—when she was a little girl."

"I think I'll ask mamma to give me one," Marjorie said.

"What did grandpa mean when he said he wanted me to be a candle? Do you know?"

"He meant you must be good, I 'spect," Marjorie replied in an offhand manner as she picked some Spanish needles from her dress.

"Candles aren't good; that's silly," said Caro scornfully.

"I don't care, he meant something like that; you ask him."

She did ask him that evening. It was just at twilight and Dr. Barrows was sealing a letter to his daughter when Caro seated herself on the

arm of his chair. "Can I talk to you grandpa?" she asked; and as if he too wished to join in the conversation, Trolley, with one silent spring was on the study table, close to the president's elbow.

"He'll do for a paper weight, won't he?" laughed Caro, as the cat gravely seated himself on the notes for to-morrow's lecture. "And he can lick your stamps for you," she added.

Her grandfather laughed a little at this bright idea. "Well Mischief," he asked, "what do you wish to talk about?"

"I want to know how I can be a candle?"

"What do candles do?"

"Shine?"

"Yes; they make a little brightness—give a little cheer. Can't my girl do that?"

"Marjorie said you meant 'be good.'"

"Well—yes, only I should say be loving and kind. There are so many sad, lonely, worried people in the world, who need a little cheer. The very best way to be a candle is to love people, Caro."

"I love *you,* grandpa!"

"And you bring a great deal of cheer into my life, dear."

"Do I?" with a pleased laugh. She put her arms around her grandfather's neck and pressed her cheek to his for a moment, then with a sudden change from seriousness to mischief, she turned to Trolley. "Pussie," she said, "you must be a candle too. You must love me, and you mustn't be cross when there isn't any cream on your milk—and we'll both shine together."

# CHAPTER IV

## THE GRAYSON HOUSE

On pleasant afternoons the president and his little granddaughter were frequently to be seen walking down street together. Aunt Charlotte found it very little trouble in these days to get her brother to take his constitutional. The sight of Caro looking like an autumn sprite in her red jacket, was enough.

" Come grandpa, it is time for our walk," she would announce, and Dr. Barrows would obediently lay down his pen or his book, and follow. And the sight of her happy, rosy face, as she frisked about in the fallen leaves, the sound of her merry voice as she asked innumerable questions, made him forget his anxiety over seminary affairs, and before he knew it he was looking up at the blue sky, breathing deeply the delicious air, with something of the same joyousness.

"Grandpa, don't you think that is a beautiful house?"

They were walking out Grayson avenue, and as Caro spoke she pointed to a large old-fashioned mansion of gray stone, with a row of stately pillars across its front. It stood in the midst of extensive grounds where were many fine trees and shrubs, in the background hothouses were to be seen, and nearer the street a fountain was sending up a silvery shower.

A cloud crossed the president's face as he replied; "Yes, dear, it is a beautiful place. That is where Trolley once lived."

"Are there any children there?" she asked.

"No; Miss Grayson and her invalid brother live there alone."

It was a very large house for just two persons, Caro thought. "Did Trolley belong to the sick brother?" she asked.

"I don't know; perhaps so."

"Don't you suppose he was sorry?"

"Very likely, but it couldn't be helped you know, Trolley was determined to live with us."

"I am glad he did," said Caro.

She couldn't ask any more questions for Professor Rice joined them and began to talk

to her grandfather, but she could think, and it presently occurred to her that this must be the place that adjoined Marjorie's orchard. She walked along very soberly, her mind full of the sick man no one ever saw, and the gate that was never opened.

When she and Marjorie went over on the avenue to mail a letter not long after this, Caro asked, "Did you know that your gate opened into the garden of the Grayson house?"

"Why yes, of course. Look Caro! there's Miss Elizabeth now!"

They were almost at the gate, and as Marjorie spoke a tall, handsome woman crossed the sidewalk and entered the carriage that was waiting for her.

"Doesn't she look cross!" Marjorie exclaimed.

But Caro was too much impressed with her elegance to consider her expression, which was not cross, by the way, only extremely sad.

"Let's play dressing up," she proposed, "and I bid to be Miss Grayson."

Marjorie was willing and chose to be Mrs. Rice the professor's wife who had at present the distinction of being the seminary bride. As

a coachman was needed, little Tom Turner who sat on the curbstone longing for an invitation, was offered the position, and perched on a piano stool in front of a steamer chair he drove his spirited horses—two rocking chairs—with great skill.

Miss Grayson in an old silk gown of Aunt Charlotte's swept into her carriage with astonishing dignity any number of times that morning, followed by Mrs. Rice in a flowered kimono.

When they grew tired of this play they went to the orchard, and there Caro decided that it would be quite easy to climb the wall if you didn't mind the currant bushes.

"You'd better not," cried Marjorie, shocked at such audacity, but when she was assured that it was just lovely up there, she could not resist and she and Tom followed.

It was an old-fashioned garden into which the children looked, already rather brown and bare except for a few chrysanthemums and asters, but still with a beauty of its own quite different from the smooth elegance of the grounds in front of the house.

They sat there full of delight over their adventure, craning their necks to see as far as possible into this unknown land, when there came the sound of footsteps on the fallen leaves.

Marjorie was down in an instant, and Tom after her, but Caro waited till an invalid's chair appeared, rolled by a tall colored man. In the midst of the rugs and shawls a handsome, boyish face was to be seen, and Caro who had expected—she didn't know what—was so surprised that instead of slipping down after Marjorie as she had intended she sat perfectly still.

"Stop just here Thompson, I must have that bit of view through the trees," said the occupant of the chair, and Caro saw he had a camera.

She watched with interest till the right position was found and the picture taken.

"Now turn me around, so I can get that white birch against the stone wall."

Close to the birch sat Caro. "Wait a minute and I'll get down," she called, remembering how provoked Brother Arthur was when she got in his way.

"Stay just where you are," a decided voice

commanded, and Caro staid, feeling not unlike the convicts at the prison who had to have their pictures taken whether they liked it or not.

It was over in a second and then down she scrambled and ran after the other children.

"Caro! what made you so long? what did you see?" Marjorie cried.

"Nothing but two men; but Marjorie they took my picture!"

"Oh Caro, maybe they are going to arrest you!"

"I don't believe they are," Caro answered gravely, "for do you know Marjorie he—the sick man I mean—is very nice looking."

As they walked back to the house she added, "Just think how dreadful it must be not to be able to walk."

## CHAPTER V

### TROLLEY GOES VISITING

"GRANDPA tell me about the Graysons please."

Dr. Barrows hesitated, for it was to him a sad story. He and Caro sat together on the wide hall sofa watching the wood fire that had been started for the first time that afternoon. Close to the hearth Trolley lay at full length washing one of his front paws with a professional air.

"I am dreadfully afraid it is going to rain," Caro said.

"Why my dear it is as clear as clear can be!" her grandfather exclaimed.

"It is sure to if Trolley washes behind his ears," she answered wisely, "But do tell me please about the Graysons."

So, as he did not like to refuse anything to that curly head now leaning against his shoulder, her grandfather told her about the

handsome Miss Elizabeth who when only a girl had taken charge of her father's house and given a mother's care to her young brother and sister.

"What were their names?" asked Caro.

"Walter and Annette."

"And they used to play with Charlie and Alice; didn't they?"

"Yes," answered her grandfather, with a sigh, "Those were happy days. Well after a while Mr. Grayson the father died, and then little Annette, and there were only Miss Elizabeth and Walter left in that great house. All Miss Elizabeth's love was lavished on this brother and he was worthy of it—a wonderfully fine fellow."

Something in her grandfather's tone caused Caro to ask, "Did he die too?"

"No, but in the midst of his college course he lost his health. It was a strange, strange thing, for he seemed perfectly well and strong, and ever since then he has been growing more helpless each year."

"And couldn't anybody cure him?"

"No one; although his sister took him to the wisest physicians in this country and abroad.

They were away for a long time but now they have come home and have shut themselves in with their sorrow."

"Marjorie said they weren't nice," put in Caro.

"Marjorie ought not to say that; she does not understand. It was the trolley line on Grayson avenue that made the trouble. Your Uncle Horace was president of the railway company, and this made the Graysons angry with him, and it caused a break between the families."

Dr. Barrows did not tell how he had attempted to act as peacemaker and had been received by Miss Elizabeth with a cold disdain which showed him that he was included in the bitter feeling she had toward his brother. And what troubled him most was that in this way his beloved seminary had lost one of its best friends and most generous contributors.

"Miss Elizabeth is a good woman," he added; "she built our beautiful chapel in memory of her father and sister,—she can be generous and kind, and I for one cannot speak hardly of her, knowing her great sorrow. I only wish I could do something for her."

"Grandpa I have seen Walter, and I think he is very nice looking. I saw him over the fence at Marjorie's and—"

"My dear I think you'd better keep away from the fence. I fear you have been prying," was the reply, and Caro did not tell the rest of her story.

After she was in bed that night she lay awake for a long time watching the little candle-star and thinking of the young man who would never walk again. Her grandfather's tone in speaking of him had impressed her deeply. Walter must be one of those sad, lonely people who needed a little cheer, and she wished so much she could do something for him. Just before she fell asleep an idea came into her head.

Trolley—a vision of graceful curves—was watching some sparrows quarreling together in the top of a maple tree next day when Caro pounced upon him.

"You are going to be a candle and take a little cheer to a person who is lonely—at least I think he is, and if I were lonely I'd like to have you come to see me, for you are a great comfort."

Trolley amiably allowed himself to be gathered up into her arms, taking the precaution however to fasten his claws securely in the shoulder of her red jacket.

It was very quiet around the seminary when Caro with the cat made a short cut across the campus to the avenue. A few minutes earlier on her way home from market with Aunt Charlotte, she had caught a glimpse as they passed the Grayson house, of the muffled figure in the invalid chair far back near the greenhouses.

"I do hope he is still there, Trolley," she said, beginning to feel a little breathless, for her burden was by no means light. "And I hope we won't meet a dog, for you'll be sure to run if we do," she added.

The Graysons' gate was reached however without accident, no dog appeared, and the invalid was still where she had seen him, but as she went up the gravel walk Caro began to wish she had not come. She almost expected to hear Miss Elizabeth calling to her to know what she was doing there.

Walter Grayson sat alone in the sunshine, looking straight before him at a pot of great

curly white Chrysanthemums, and as Caro made no noise in crossing the grass he was not conscious of her approach until a deep drawn sigh at his elbow caused him to turn with a start.

It would have been impossible to carry Trolley another step; too much out of breath to speak, and with cheeks which matched her jacket, she rested his weight on the broad arm of the chair while she unhooked his front paws from her shoulder. Walter watched her with very evident surprise.

"He sticks dreadfully," she said, struggling with the burr-like paws.

"I should say so;" the detaching process was rather funny, and the invalid smiled.

Caro was feeling a little shy, and the smile put her at her ease. She had lived all her life among people who loved and petted her, and it did not enter her mind that she could be unwelcome anywhere unless she was naughty.

"I thought maybe you'd like to see him," she explained.

"He is very handsome; is he your cat?"

"Why just see! He likes you," Caro ex-

claimed, as after a few preliminary turns, Trolley curled himself up on the soft rugs and began to purr, thus expressing his unqualified approval of this resting place.

"Aren't you the little girl I saw on the fence the other day? Why did you run away?"

Caro laughed; "I don't know," she said; and then feeling that her presence to-day needed to be explained more fully, she added, "I thought maybe you'd like to see Trolley, because he is such a comfort to me when I am lonely."

"And did you think I was lonely?" There was a cloud on the young man's face as he spoke.

"I thought you must be," she said simply, "because you can't go everywhere."

"Then why are you lonely? You can go where you please."

"But I miss mamma and papa and the boys sometimes, and then—" she leaned against his chair and spoke in a confidential tone, "I'm afraid of the dark."

"So am I," Walter remarked gravely.

"Are you? I didn't know grown up people

ever were—but if you'll just get a candle you won't be—any more. The dark is very nice when you can see it."

As Walter seemed interested, watching her gravely as he stroked Trolley, Caro went on to explain more fully about the candle, and how her grandfather had said she could be one herself. "And so," she concluded, "I thought Trolley might be a candle too, and bring you a little cheer."

"I am much obliged. What do you say his name is?" Walter asked.

"Cousin Charlie named him for the trolley cars; wasn't that funny? And he used to live here you know—that is why I thought you would like to see him. He came to our house and just *would* stay, though Aunt Charlotte sent him back ever so many times."

"I believe I do recall something of the kind. He was one of my sister's pets."

"Do you suppose she'd like to see him?" Caro asked.

A smile flitted across Walter's face as he replied, "I really don't know; she is out this morning."

The conversation was brought to an end by

the appearance of Thompson, who was no doubt greatly surprised to find a little girl and a striped cat with his master.

"I think I'd better go," Caro said, "Aunt Charlotte might want me, but Trolley can stay awhile if you'd like to have him."

Trolley as if to expostulate against being disturbed, tucked his head almost out of sight and curled up tighter than before. No one could have had the heart to disturb him.

"She is the child we saw on the fence the other day, Thompson," Mr. Grayson explained as Caro ran off.

"Yes, sir;" Thompson replied, watching till the red jacket disappeared in the distance; "She's visiting here—she's Dr. Barrow's granddaughter; I have seen her playing about. Shall I take you down through the garden sir?"

As he was wheeled along the sunny path there was a smile on Walter's face. Caro had been right, he was lonely, and after the first moment he had not resented her sympathy, and now the pressure of Trolley's very substantial frame against his arm, the thought of the little girl's face as she told about her candle, gave

him a new sense of companionship. When he had said he too was afraid of the dark, he was thinking of the future which once had been so bright to him, and over which the clouds had gathered so heavily; but a little cheer had found its way to his heart, and he could smile.

"Thompson, you needn't mention it to Miss Elizabeth,—the child having been here I mean —it might annoy her."

"No sir;" was the reply. "And I hope she'll come again," he added to himself, for he did not approve of the dreary, shut-in life led by his master.

# CHAPTER VI

## A LOCAL SNOW STORM

AFTER Caro reached home she began to be afraid that Trolley would not come back and the thought made her rather unhappy, but just as the lunch bell rang he came trotting across the lawn. She was watching at the window and ran to open the door, giving him such a warm welcome that the president who saw it, remarked to Aunt Charlotte, "I don't know what Caro would do without that cat."

That very day Dr. Barrows left town on seminary business and was gone several weeks. Hard times had effected the seminary, an effort must be made to increase its funds, and this was the task the president had before him. In this way it happened that he heard nothing of the visit to Walter Grayson.

Caro missed him very much, for although she and Aunt Charlotte were beginning to understand each other, they would never be

the intimate friends she and her grandfather were.

When Marjorie heard the story she exclaimed, "Why Caro! You had better not let Aunt Charlotte know; she'll scold you like everything."

Caro was puzzled. Her grandfather had said he was sorry for the Graysons and wished he could do something for them. She had thought of something—surely this couldn't be wrong, and yet she felt Marjorie was probably right when she said Aunt Charlotte would not approve.

About this time the little girls began to have lessons together every morning, sitting in small chairs on either side of the cutting table in their aunt's bedroom. They read from a small green volume called "Little Annie's Third Book," a favorite of Aunt Charlotte's, from which she had taught the children of the family for the last forty years. Caro privately thought it rather silly, but accepted it because mamma had read in it when she was little.

Caro meant to try very hard while grandpa was away, to be a pleasure and not an annoyance to her aunt and Jane, so she might have

a good report for him when he returned. During the first week she succeeded so well that Aunt Charlotte remarked to her sister-in-law, Marjorie's mother, that she had never known two better children than those little girls.

Alas! it was not long before she was compelled to change her opinion.

One afternoon when the ground was damp and Marjorie had a cold, Miss Barrows told them they might play in the garret. It happened to be her reception day, and up there, she thought, with the door closed they might make all the noise they pleased without disturbing the elegant repose of her drawing room.

Little Tom who as usual was hanging around, was graciously invited in, and the three ran off in high spirits.

"I don't think there is anything there they can possibly hurt," Aunt Charlotte said to herself.

Now in this long, low room, near the front windows was an old four post bedstead, upon which was a large feather bed. It had not been in use for a long time, and Aunt Charlotte was planning to make some pillows out of it. Nothing could have offered a more alluring play-

ground than this mountainous bed; to climb upon the cedar chest which stood near, and take a flying leap into the middle of it, was tremendous fun.

The excitement was growing when Marjorie made a discovery. "Caro!" she cried, "the feathers are coming out!"

Sure enough on one side of the mattress there was a long rip, and from it the feathers were beginning to fly.

"It is like a snowstorm," exclaimed Caro, taking her turn at jumping.

"Goody, a snowstorm! Let's pretend it's snowing," Marjorie cried, and Tom clapped his hands and danced with joy at the idea.

Such active exercise was heating, so they put up the windows and then the fun grew fast and furious. Around and around they went; up on the chest, over on the bed, down on the floor, screaming and laughing, while the feathers flew in all directions, and the bed grew smaller and smaller.

Trolley who looked in through the half open door to see what was going on, ran down stairs in disgust, and sitting on the bottom step of the last flight sneezed and sneezed till Miss Bar-

rows who was entertaining Mrs. Rice in the parlor couldn't help wondering aloud what was the matter with that cat!

"What charming children your little nieces are, Miss Barrows," Mrs. Rice remarked as she rose to go.

Aunt Charlotte replied in gratified tones that they *were* nice children, then as she opened the door for her visitor, she exclaimed. "Can it be snowing?"

"Surely not; it is as mild as May," said the visitor.

But certainly the air was full of something very like snow; both ladies were puzzled.

"Why Miss Barrows it is *feathers!*" Mrs. Rice cried, picking an unmistakable goose feather from her sleeve. "See!"

Aunt Charlotte stepped to the edge of the porch and looked up; yes, they came from the third story windows, accompanied by a sound of great merriment. Forgetting ceremony, she left her visitor without a word, and climbed the stairs as fast as her portly frame allowed.

What a scene met her eye! A scene of feathers and wild hilarity. Breathing was almost impossible and she quickly withdrew to the

hall where, rapping sternly on the door, she called "Children! children! what does this mean?"

Presto! What a change! Three perspiring, befeathered children came suddenly to themselves and stared at one another in dismay.

"We'll sweep them up and put them back, Aunt Charlotte," said Caro.

"I told Caro there was a rip, and that the feathers would come out," explained Marjorie in a tone of injured innocence.

Quite speechless, Tom slid off the bed, now a tearful sight in its dwindled proportions.

"I never heard of such badness," Aunt Charlotte gasped, and leaning over the railing she called, "Jane—Jane! bring a whisk broom here."

Jane came and the culprits were led into another room and brushed and shaken until they were thoroughly bewildered.

"I'd rather pick chickens and be done with it," Jane remarked in disgust.

"Aunt Charlotte never said we mustn't," Marjorie sobbed.

"Well who would ever have thought of your

doing a thing like this! Feathers all over the neighborhood!"

Caro giggled nervously.

"Oh yes, I'd laugh—it's very funny. Just wait till your grandfather hears about it!"

Caro had a saucy reply on the end of her tongue, but the thought of grandpa, checked it. "Let your little candle remind you to be a pleasure and comfort to Aunt Charlotte while I am away," he had said.

She had meant to be good, and she had been dreadfully naughty, the sight of the disordered room and the sorry looking mattress, and the feather-strewn lawn, was proof enough.

She listened meekly when, dismissing Tom, Aunt Charlotte took them into her room and to use her own words, gave them a talking to.

"What do you suppose Mrs. Rice thinks? Why our lawn might be a barnyard,—she actually thought it was snow!"

In spite of her repentance this made Caro smile, and her aunt shook her head solemnly, saying "I don't know what to do with you Caroline; I am ashamed of you!"

"But I'm truly sorry Aunt Charlotte."

"If you are I don't see why you laugh. Now I believe Marjorie is sorry," and Miss Barrows looked with approval at that tearful maiden.

As if this were not disgrace enough for one household, Trolley after he had recovered from the feathers made his way into the kitchen and stole one of the birds the cook was preparing for supper.

Caro found him at dusk sitting in solemn majesty before the hall fire, quite as if nothing had happened.

"Trolley," she said, getting down beside him on the rug, "do you know you have been naughty too?"

He rubbed his head against her hand in a manner that said as plainly as words, "Pet me."

"Did you get a spanking, Trolley? I don't know what Aunt Charlotte is going to do to me. You are so nice and soft; you are a great comfort." As Caro made a pillow of him Trolley broke into a loud purr.

"I am sorry I was naughty—I just didn't think a bit. It was such fun to see the feathers fly. I wanted to be good while grandpa was away, and now I've spoiled it. Oh dear, I wish

mamma would come and take me home, I am so lonesome!"

Trolley didn't understand how anyone could be unhappy before such a pleasant fire, with him for company, and he continued to purr loudly while Caro's tears fell fast. His view of things prevailed after a while, and when Aunt Charlotte came down stairs she found the two curled up together on the rug, fast asleep.

The tear stains on Caro's cheek softened her. Perhaps the child really felt more than she showed, and she decided she would not take away her candle that night as a punishment, as she had thought of doing. More than this she let her have peach preserves for supper.

The preserves went to Caro's heart and made her more penitent than ever. "I'm truly going to be good after this, and I'll help Jane pick up the feathers," she said as she kissed her aunt good-night.

## CHAPTER VII

### IN THE GARDEN

EVERYBODY agreed that the weather was remarkable that fall; far into November it lasted warm and bright, and Walter Grayson who found life more endurable under the open sky than within four walls, spent a large part of each day out of doors attended by his faithful Thompson.

Caro's visit had stirred anew his longing for the old companionships that had once been his. When at length after their long absence they had decided to come home, he had looked forward to it almost eagerly, but his sister whose pride shrank from sympathy took it for granted that to meet his old acquaintances could be only painful to him, and those who had ventured to call were not admitted.

Walter was in the habit of acquiescing in her decisions, and in the first shock of his illness he had felt the same shrinking from pity, but

now the sense of loneliness was becoming almost unbearable. As he was wheeled about the garden he lived over again the merry days of his childhood, and the quarrel that had separated him from those he had cared most for, seemed a small matter in the light of these memories.

The Graysons had long been people of wealth and influence in Charmington, and in Miss Elizabeth's opinion it was a direct insult when her wishes were ignored and the beauty of the avenue which had been named for her grandfather was, as she thought, forever ruined. That her personal friends could side against her, added to the bitterness. She refused to see that Dr. Barrows was not responsible for his brother's actions, and proudly withdrew her friendship from the whole family, and her gifts from the seminary.

No doubt her grief over her brother made her more bitter than she would otherwise have been; at least so Dr. Barrows thought, and would not speak ill of her.

Walter upon whom she lavished everything affection could suggest, or money buy, felt that he could not ask for the only thing he really

wanted. And at times he told himself despondently that he was forgotten, that his friends no longer cared for him.

Caro's simple friendliness had won his heart, the possibility of seeing her again added a little interest to his lonely life; and Thompson too, seeing the good effect of her visit, was on the watch for her.

When one afternoon they saw her in her scarlet jacket, looking over the garden wall, Walter waved his hand and Thompson grinned broadly over the back of the chair, while Caro nodded and smiled in response, quite as if they had been old friends.

"Don't you want to see your picture?" Walter asked; "they are on the library table, Thompson," he added.

As the man went off Caro swung her feet over on the Grayson side of the fence, and then in another minute she had slipped down and was beside Walter's chair. "I mustn't stay long," she said. "Marjorie has gone to the dentist's and I told her I'd wait till she came back."

"How is the cat?"

"He is very well, thank you, but he has been bad. He stole a bird."

"You don't say so!"

"Yes, and so have I."

"You don't mean you have stolen a bird?"

Caro laughed. "Of course not; I wouldn't steal, but Marjorie and Tom and I jumped all the feathers out of Aunt Charlotte's bed."

"What naughty children," said Walter smiling.

"Yes," agreed Caro with a sigh, "and I meant to be good while grandpa was away. I promised him I'd try to be a candle and then I forgot."

"What do you mean by being a candle?"

"Oh—being pleasant and nice to Aunt Charlotte and Jane,—not making trouble you know. The feathers were all over the front lawn and Mrs. Rice thought it was snowing." Caro laughed a little at the recollection.

"Grandpa said the best way to be a candle was to love people, and I do love him ever so much, but I don't love Jane. I love Aunt Charlotte too, but she doesn't like to talk to me, so I miss grandpa."

"I know how that is. I too wish sometimes for someone to talk to," Walter replied.

Here Thompson appeared with the photographs, and everything else was forgotten.

"They are a little too grave," Walter said, comparing them with the glowing face beside him; "We must try again sometime."

"And let's have Trolley in it too," Caro suggested.

"Why certainly, that is a good idea. Do you know Caro you remind me of my little sister."

"Do you mean Annette?"

"Why what can you know about her?" Walter asked in surprise.

"Grandpa told me. I asked him who lived in your house—and then I saw her window in the chapel—the Good Shepherd you know. Grandpa said she was a dear little girl. Do I truly look like her!"

"Yes, there is something in your face and smile that is like her;" Walter looked thoughtfully at the picture.

"Won't you please tell me about her?" begged Caro.

And so while Thompson wheeled his master

up and down the garden paths, she walked beside him and listened to the story of those days when the gate now nailed up was always open, and merry girls and boys ran back and forth.

"What nice times you did have!" Caro exclaimed, pressing the palms of her hands together. "I wish we could do some of those lovely things. Couldn't we have a picnic and have a fire and roast potatoes and corn?"

Her interest was a pleasant thing to the invalid; he laughed at the eager face; "Well, why can't we?" he said. "What do you think Thompson?"

"Why of course we can, sir, if you like," was the answer.

"And have Marjorie and Tom?" cried Caro eagerly.

It seemed impossible to refuse her, but when he thought of it afterwards Walter began to doubt if he had been wise. What would his sister think—or the Barrows, when it was discovered that he had been entertaining the children in the garden? Still it was too late now—he had promised.

As for Caro no doubts spoiled her anticipation. She gave Marjorie a most animated ac-

count of the pleasure in store for them, and her cousin was as interested as she could wish.

"It will be lovely, Caro, and we'll keep it a secret," she said, for there was nothing Marjorie liked so well as a mystery.

Finding Tom, they proceeded to excite his curiosity.

"Say—don't you wish you knew what we are going to do to-morrow?" they both exclaimed.

"What are you going to do?" he asked, pulling his ear and realizing that he was about to be teased.

"We can't tell, but it is something awfully nice," said Caro, "Isn't it Marjorie?"

"Isn't it though!" and the two looked knowingly at each other.

"There's going to be something to eat," Marjorie added.

"A candy pulling, I bet," cried Tom.

"No indeed!" they both cried.

After carrying this on for half an hour and goading Tom to the point of desperation, Marjorie said, "If you'll promise honest truly you won't tell you can come over to-morrow and *maybe* we'll let you into it."

"Truly I won't tell," Tom promised, brightening.

"Do you think you'd let him into it Caro? He might spoil it."

"Oh I guess so," Caro replied, and they ran off leaving him alone with his curiosity.

All this mystery added not a little to the delights of the picnic next day in the Grayson garden, and certainly for its size there was never a merrier one.

Tom was a little uncomfortable at first, for Marjorie's dark hints about the garden had impressed him deeply, but he soon recovered from this and helped Thompson make a fire on the very spot where Charlie and Walter had built theirs in days gone by.

The children thought nothing ever tasted so good as the corn roasted there; there were grapes and apples besides and some fascinating bon-bons, but the corn was the most fun, they insisted.

Not being in the habit of providing for such feasts Thompson forgot the salt, and Marjorie and Caro had the excitement of running to the house and having the cook inquire what they were going to do with salt.

On a seat made of a plank supported on bricks the three children sat and feasted and chattered, while Walter looked on and enjoyed the experience of acting once more as host.

Everybody knows the peculiar pleasure of a fire out of doors; the day was cool enough to make its warmth agreeable, and the sight and sound of the crackling flames was like a tonic to the spirits.

After the feast was over they played games, such as "I have a word that rhymes with—" and "My ship comes sailing—."

They asked conundrums, and Thompson showed himself to be an accomplished sleight-of-hand man, finding silver dollars in impossible places, and making handkerchiefs appear and disappear, in a surprising manner. Never was more fun crowded into one short afternoon.

"It has been a beautiful picnic, and I am very much obliged to you," Caro said to Walter as they were separating.

"So am I," echoed Marjorie, and Tom would have said the same if he hadn't been bashful, as it was he could only grin.

"I am just as much obliged to you for com-

ing to my picnic," Walter replied, and he added to Caro, "Goodby little Candle." This was the first time in more than four years that he had given any pleasure to anybody, he thought on the way to the house.

Miss Elizabeth stood at the door: "Surely Walter you are staying out too late," she said: "Are you not chilled?"

"Not at all; you can trust Thompson for that," he answered.

As for Thompson, he wished Miss Grayson could have seen her brother as he told stories and laughed at the pranks of his visitors, and he determined that if he could bring it about there should be more occasions of the sort.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MISS ELIZABETH RECEIVES A SHOCK

Miss Grayson rejoiced in her brother's unusual cheerfulness, and when she was called away for a few days to a neighboring city on business she left with the less reluctance. Home had after all proved the best place for him, she thought.

She was gone several days, and at the last minute after telegraphing that she would be at home at eight in the evening, she found she could take an earlier train that arrived at three. There was no time for anything but a hurried drive to the station, and she decided, it would be just as well to surprise Walter. How glad he would be to see her five hours ahead of time! She felt quite happy over the thought as she stepped from the train at Charmington.

There was of course no one to meet her, and as the day was pleasant and the distance short

she walked home. She might have taken the street cars if her feeling on the subject had not made it impossible.

It was only natural that the servant who opened the door for her should seem surprised, but Miss Elizabeth observed an odd hesitation in his manner when in reply to her questions he said Mr. Grayson was in the library.

To the library she hastened, and as she went there came to her astonished ears the strains of The Last Rose of Summer,—for years that music box had been untouched—and mingled with it was a sound like children's voices. Before her on a chair lay an unfamiliar scarlet jacket with other articles of outdoor apparel, and from the floor a pair of small but saucy looking rubber shoes forced themselves upon her vision. What did it mean—was she dreaming?

At the door she paused. In front of the wood fire blazing brightly at one end of the spacious room, Walter's couch was drawn and around him in attitudes of eager interest were three children. They were evidently absorbed in the story he was telling with an animation his sister had thought never to see again.

Strewn upon the floor were photographs, and on a table a costly illustrated book on birds —one of her brother's old favorites—lay open; but at present everything else was forgotten in the interest of the story which seemed to be one of adventure, for there was frequent mention of bears. This much Miss Grayson's bewildered mind took in.

And this was the lonely invalid to whom she had hastened home! Certainly he was not missing her, for she stood there quite unobserved. And who were these children who had brought such a light to his eyes? All her devotion had failed to do as much for him. Turning she saw Thompson hovering uneasily in the distance, and swept down upon him.

"Who are those children in the library?" she demanded. Miss Grayson was exceedingly stately and Thompson felt abashed.

"Why Miss Elizabeth they're just some children—"

"I see that; I asked who they are and what they are doing here?"

"Well you see Miss Elizabeth it looked like Mr. Walter was mighty lonesome to-day and

it was too damp to be on the ground, so I just took the liberty of asking them in to amuse him. It looks like there's not much for him to do."

"Did Mr. Grayson tell you to ask them?"

"No m'm, but he seemed right glad to see them. It has cheered him up considerable." The sound of laughter from the library emphasized this.

"But who *are* they?" Miss Grayson asked again. Thompson was very trying to her, and it was only because he suited her brother so well that she kept him.

"I don't know exactly, ma'm; they are some kin of Dr. Barrows over at the seminary I believe."

This was more than she could stand. Telling herself that such excitement must be bad for Walter she swept back to the library. The last notes of music had died away, and Caro heard the rustle of her dress and turned.

Miss Elizabeth had thrown back her fur collar, in her face was an unusual glow, she was very handsome Caro thought.

The eyes of the others followed hers, and for

a few seconds they all gazed at the lady in silence. Then Walter found his voice:

"Why Elizabeth! I did not expect you so early," he exclaimed.

"I found I could get off sooner than I thought when I telegraphed. I fear you are tiring yourself," she added coming to his side and bending over him, entirely ignoring the children.

Caro rose; "I 'spect we'd better go," she said. "It is a lovely story, but if you are tired we can come some other time."

"I am not tired, Caro," Walter answered, taking her hand, "but perhaps you'd better go now, and as you say we will finish the story another time." They smiled at each other in a way that expressed a world of friendly confidence.

Without another word Miss Grayson turned and left the room. She felt she was a marplot, and yet—those children—what else could she have done? As she went up stairs the sounds of laughter followed her; she wished she had not hurried home.

She did not mention the children when she

returned to her brother after they had gone, but talked of business and other matters, making an effort to act as if nothing unusual had happened.

After dinner when they were alone together before the fire, Walter spoke: "Elizabeth there is something I want very much."

She smoothed his hair caressingly from his forehead as she replied, "You know dear if it is anything I can give you, you shall have it."

"But this will be hard for you;" Walter hesitated, then added, "It is my old friends I want."

She caught her breath; "I don't understand," she said.

Then her brother told her about Caro's visit with Trolley. "It has made me feel," he continued, "as I have thought about it since, that I have been living very selfishly. My life as I used to think of it has to be sure, been spoiled, but there are still small things I might do—to make a little cheer, as Caro says—and to begin with I want my friends again. I want to forget—I want you to forget—all that has been unpleasant in the past."

"And you think they will be willing to come back to you, do you?" Miss Elizabeth asked bitterly.

"Yes, I think they will," he said simply.

Miss Grayson had often told herself there was nothing she would not do for her brother, but had she dreamed of anything like this? Her proud heart had a fierce battle to fight.

"I shan't ever be Miss Elizabeth again when we dress up; I don't like her at all," Caro said as the children walked down the garden path together.

"I told you she was cross," Marjorie replied.

For lack of a better confidant Trolley heard the story that night. "I don't blame you one bit for not wanting to live with her, for I 'spect she just scared you to death," was Caro's conclusion emphasized by a vigorous hug.

## CHAPTER IX

### ANNETTE'S WINDOW

"MARJORIE, grandpa is coming home this afternoon; don't you want to go to meet him? Aunt Charlotte says we may go in the carriage." It was the first cold day of the season and Caro looked like a bright-eyed squirrel in her gray coat and chinchilla furs.

Of course Marjorie wished to go, and although it was an hour and a half before train time she put on her coat and hat and the two went out to frisk up and down the walk until the carriage came.

They went as far as the seminary chapel, and seeing the door open Caro said, "Let's go in and look at Annette's window.

Marjorie was willing and in they went. Some one from a distance was giving a course of Bible lectures to the students in the chapel, and the one for that day was just over.

It was a small building, beautifully proportioned and decorated; the somewhat somber richness of the interior being relieved by the beautiful windows.

The children found it great fun to walk about in perfect freedom instead of being obliged to sit in sedate silence, and they forgot to think about the time. They stood for a while before the window on which was represented the Good Shepherd freeing a lamb from a thorn bush, and spelled out the words beneath it: "In memoriam A. G."

"I should like to have a window," Caro said.

"But you can't unless you are dead," Marjorie answered.

Caro was disposed to doubt this and would have begun to argue the question if the sound of a banging door had not startled her. "What was that Marjorie? I guess we'd better go," she said.

Pushing open the swinging door they went out into the vestibule, and there they found the outside door fast closed.

"Oh Marjorie, it is shut tight, I can't open it!" Caro cried.

Marjorie tried in her turn, but it was of no use, the janitor not knowing they were in the chapel had locked the door and gone away.

"What shall we do? We shall be late to meet grandpa," wailed Caro.

Marjorie began to pound on the door and call, but this they soon realized could do no good. "Nobody can hear us it is so thick," she said, beginning to cry.

"Don't cry Marjorie; maybe Clifford will come back again. But I'm afraid we won't get out in time to meet grandpa," Caro added with a little choke in her voice at the thought.

"Clifford won't be back till to-morrow I know," and Marjorie continued to sob.

"But they'll look for us, I know they will," Caro insisted.

It was dark and chilly in the vestibule so they went back into the chapel where the air was still warm. Even here the light was dim, for the short afternoon was nearly over. The shadows looked so dark in the corners that Marjorie exclaimed, "Oh Caro I'm afraid!"

"I don't think anything can happen to us, and they will find us pretty soon I'm sure,"

said Caro encouragingly, although she couldn't help thinking how very dark it would be after a while.

"We'll starve! I am hungry now," Marjorie said tearfully.

There was nothing to do but wait. They sat down in the seat usually occupied by Aunt Charlotte when they went to afternoon service with her, two very forlorn little girls. Suddenly Marjorie flung herself down on the cushions and began to cry and sob wildly. Caro's tears fell more quietly, and after a time she wiped them from her eyes and looked up at the window. In the fading light she could just see the gentle, tender smile of the Good Shepherd as he rescued the lamb. It comforted her, and when Marjorie's passion of crying had exhausted itself, she said softly "Marjorie look at the Good Shepherd!"

"It is too dark to see."

"Marjorie let's ask him to send someone to find us."

"Well," Marjorie agreed.

"And soon," Caro added, "And to help us not to be afraid."

In the dusk two little figures knelt, two little

heads were bowed on the cushions. When Caro lifted hers she thought something wonderful had happened, for there was the Shepherd smiling down on them just as if he were about to speak. It was the electric light on the campus which had shone out while their eyes were closed, and made it seem almost like day.

"We needn't be afraid now Marjorie," Caro said calling her attention to it. "But I do hope it won't be very long, for I want so to see grandpa."

At that moment Dr. Barrows was wanting very much to see his little girl. When he stepped from his carriage expecting to hear her merry voice, and to see her flying to him, there was only his sister standing in the door with an anxious face, greeting him with: "The children have disappeared Charles, and can't be found!"

After a few questions the president hurried over to his brother's, vague stories of kidnappers floating through his brain. It seemed strange indeed that two little girls could disappear so completely in so short a time, leaving no clew to their whereabouts.

The whole neighborhood was presently aroused, and professors and students might be seen running in every direction. Just how soon it would have occurred to anybody to look in the chapel it is impossible to say, but it so happened that Dr. Smith the lecturer was to leave town that evening, and in putting his papers together he missed some valuable notes which he thought must have been left on the desk in the chapel. The janitor was sent for, and in half an hour after the electric light shone out, the children, as well as the manuscript, were found.

"It is so nice to be found!" Caro said, with her arms clasped about her grandfather's neck; "but I truly wasn't afraid after the light came, for the Good Shepherd looked so kind."

# CHAPTER X

## OLD FRIENDS

"THERE is one thing I don't understand," remarked Aunt Charlotte at the breakfast table, "and that is how one of the Grayson servants happened to come over here to ask about the children yesterday."

"It was Thompson, I guess," said Caro who was eating her oatmeal, stopping every other minute to smile at her grandfather.

"Who is Thompson?" he asked.

"He is the one who takes care of Walter, and he is very nice. Why grandpa, he is almost as good as Kellar; he can do all sorts of sleight-of-hand tricks!"

"But how do you know anything about him or Walter either?" asked Aunt Charlotte.

Then Caro remembered that she had not told anyone about all that had gone on in the garden, and she couldn't think where to begin.

"Can't you answer your aunt," said her grandfather.

"Why yes—Aunt Charlotte,—I know them, —I got acquainted with them a long time ago."

"With Walter Grayson? Why no one ever sees him; you must be mistaken," Miss Barrows exclaimed.

"But I *went* to see him," said Caro. "It wasn't wrong, was it grandpa? You know you said to be a candle was to take a little cheer to lonely people—and I was sure he must be lonely. I thought maybe he'd like to see Trolley 'cause he lived there once, so I took him. Do you think it was wrong?"

"My dear I don't know what to say—" the president put down his knife and fork and looked at Aunt Charlotte, and then at his granddaughter. "You mean to say you took the cat to see Walter Grayson?"

Caro nodded; "Yes, grandpa."

"I'd like to know what she'll do next!" cried Miss Barrows.

"But how did he treat you?" questioned her grandfather. "Did he tell you you were an officious little girl?"

"I think he liked to see me, 'cause after that we had a picnic."

In the midst of these explanations a note was brought in to the president. It read:

"Dear Dr. Barrows,—If you can spare the time will you not come to see me within the next day or two? I am anxious to have a talk with you. If you have forgotten the way Caro will come with you I am sure.

"Your friend,

"WALTER GRAYSON."

Dr. Barrows read it aloud, and then looked at his sister again.

"Grandpa he must think you are pretty stupid if you could forget that little way," Caro said laughing.

"I fear I am rather stupid sometimes," he said smiling; "Well Pigeon we'll go over there after lunch."

So it came about that Caro and her grandfather hand in hand, went over to the Grayson's that afternoon. Dr. Barrows still felt puzzled, and half believed he was dreaming, but his granddaughter was very wide awake indeed.

She quite hoped they would see haughty Miss Elizabeth again, for with her grandfather beside her she was ready to face anything.

The lady however was not to be seen, and they found Walter alone in the library.

" My dear boy," was all the president said as he grasped the hand stretched out to him.

" There's not much left of me, but what there is is very glad to see you," was Walter's greeting.

It was well that Caro was there to help out the conversation at first, her grandfather was kept so busy clearing his glasses. She was as full of life as the gray squirrel she resembled.

" Did you know we got lost yesterday? " she asked.

" Yes; though I didn't hear it till you were found. What were you doing in the chapel? "

" It was open you know and so we went in to look at Annette's window."

" And weren't you afraid when you found the door shut? "

" Yes, a little, when it began to get dark— and Marjorie was too. I thought it would be so *dreadfully* dark after a while, and then the electric light shone out, straight through the

window! We could see the Good Shepherd just as plain as day, and I wasn't afraid any longer; then pretty soon they found us."

"'For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,'"

Walter quoted, smiling at Dr. Barrows.

"Particularly when they are looking in the right direction," he answered.

"I suppose Caro has told you how we became acquainted," Walter said; "and I have found it so pleasant to have a friend that I want more—I want my old friends again. I can't be of any use—" he was silent for a minute, then went on, "I asked you to come because I knew you could help me. My sister has given her consent to anything I wish, but it is hard for her."

"She will be happier in the end. She is too fine a woman to shut herself in—the world needs her," answered Dr. Barrows.

"She *is* good, nobody knows it so well as I," said Walter.

"And now my boy anything I can do I will do gladly," the president added.

"It is just to let my friends know that I

shall be glad to see them, and that on our side all feeling about the old quarrel is put away. And" he added almost gaily, "I think I shall get Caro to help me with a Christmas party."

"A Christmas party here? how lovely!" she cried dancing up and down.

"I should like to see the old house look really cheerful again. Do you remember the parties we used to have when we were children, Dr. Barrows?"

"Do you mean a tree, and Santa Claus?" Caro asked coming to Walter's side after whirling around the room.

"Certainly, and all the other things that belong to Christmas," was his reply.

Caro rather changed her mind about Miss Elizabeth who met them in the hall as they were leaving.

"Dr. Barrows," she said holding out her hand, "I know what Walter has said to you—perhaps I have been wrong—I don't know, but I should never acknowledge it except for him—"

The president interrupted her, "My dear," —and Caro wondered how he could call anyone

so stately my dear,—" say no more. Let us simply forget that anything ever came between us."

And then Miss Elizabeth turned to Caro and took her hand; " This is your granddaughter, Elinor's child," she said, " I hope she will come often to see my brother, he has taken a great fancy to her."

When they reached home Aunt Charlotte met them with a letter in her hand. " What do you think? Elinor writes that she will probably spend Christmas with us!"

" Is mamma coming? How perfectly lovely! Oh grandpa aren't you glad?" Caro was so full of delight she could hardly listen to her mother's letter in which Mrs. Holland said that as they could not get their family together at home, she would come to spend the holidays at her father's with Caro, while Mr. Holland joined the boys.

" I believe it is going to be the best Christmas that ever happened," Caro exclaimed.

The weeks before Christmas were merry ones. As if to make up for his delay winter came in earnest with a heavy snow followed by

freezing weather, which made endless fun for the children. To Caro snow that lay on the ground for any length of time was a delightful novelty, and she wanted to be out from morning till night.

The cold kept Walter Grayson housed for the greater part of the time but he was enlivened by frequent visits from the children. For his benefit they built a remarkable snow man on the lawn outside the library windows and Miss Elizabeth said not a word, although her order-loving eyes found the grotesque object almost painful. It amused Walter, and so she could endure it.

He and Caro spent hours over plans for the Christmas party, to which his sister had offered no objection, but she asked no questions and shrank from having anything to do with it.

The days flew by as they always do at this time of year, with so much to prepare for and look forward to.

"Trolley," Caro said one evening, "I am sorry for you, because you don't know what fun Christmas is. Just think! Mamma is coming to-morrow, and Charlie and Alice, and we are going to have the best time!"

Trolley only purred contentedly. All days were alike to him, if he had plenty to eat and a comfortable nap, and the society of his friends.

# CHAPTER XI

## CHRISTMAS CANDLES

THE sunlight fell softly through Annette's window and across the reading desk as Dr. Barrows began the afternoon service in the chapel on the day before Christmas. The air was fragrant with the odor of cedar and pine, and against the dark oak wainscoting the holly berries shone warm and bright, as he read: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, and the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary."

Caro sat with her hand clasped in her mother's, the happiness of Christmas shining in her face; across the aisle was Marjorie with Charlie and Alice.

Just as the president began to read, the door opened and Thompson swiftly and noiselessly wheeled his master to a place at one side of the pulpit, and withdrew. Caro thought Walter

must be lonely there by himself, so after a moment's hesitation, with a smile she withdrew her hand from her mother's and stole softly up to the front seat close to the invalid.

Miss Elizabeth saw her from the back of the chapel where she sat, and tears came to her eyes. She had not wanted her brother to come, and now here was this child taking the place that should have been hers.

When her grandfather read his text Caro looked up at Walter and smiled; it seemed meant for them she thought.

"To give light to them that sit in darkness."

It is to be doubted if the president ever preached a better sermon, and yet it was only a simple little talk that the children could understand, about the Light-bringer whose love could penetrate the darkest clouds of sin or sorrow, and whose followers must in their turn become light-bearers.

Caro listened, looking up at the Good Shepherd, who again seemed to smile on her. But after they had sung, "It came upon the midnight clear"—and the benediction had been pronounced, the merry side of Christmas became uppermost. There was Charlie exclaim-

ing, "Walter old fellow I am so glad to see you!" and shaking hands warmly, and Alice and Mrs. Holland with quieter greetings. Marjorie and Tom of course joined Caro, and the president came down and added one more to the group around Walter.

At the door Miss Elizabeth waited, unable to escape altogether the friendly greetings, trying not to be impatient, while near her stood Thompson with a beaming face. This was something like living he thought.

There is something about Christmas eve which makes it different from all other evenings. There is a thrill of expectancy in the air that no one can quite escape, even though his head is grey. Caro and Marjorie skipped down the stone walk in the frosty air, hand in hand, brimful of happiness; Charlie and Alice were beside Walter, and Dr. Barrows who walked with Miss Elizabeth thought his little granddaughter was right when she said this was going to be the best Christmas that ever happened.

"Remember," said Walter, as they were separating, "that I depend on you to-morrow

to make my party a success. It is to be as much like old times as possible."

"We'll be on hand and do our best," said Charlie. "Poor fellow! what a change from four years ago," he added to his sister.

"And yet I can't quite pity him. It must be because he is so brave," Alice answered.

"And Bess, you will wear your prettiest gown, won't you?" Walter had said coaxingly.

"You know I don't care for such things any more," Miss Elizabeth urged.

"But you must. I want you to look like a queen," he insisted, and so when the Barrows arrived next evening they found their hostess in creamy satin and costly lace, with diamonds on her breast and in her dark hair. At sight of her Caro clasped her hands and cried, "Oh Miss Elizabeth you are perfectly beautiful!"

Her admiration was so evidently genuine that the lady could not help being pleased, and she stooped and kissed the rosy cheek.

"And how do you think we came?" asked Marjorie, dancing around till the blue bows on her flaxen braids danced too.

"Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you," cried Caro,

running to Walter's side, "We came through the gate,—Charlie opened it, the gate in the orchard. We shan't have to climb the fence any more."

The invitations read "To meet Miss Caro Holland" and Caro in her fluffy white dress with a spray of holly on her shoulders stood beside Miss Elizabeth and Walter and helped receive the guests. The spacious house was all thrown open, brilliantly lighted and beautiful in its Christmas decorations, for neither trouble nor expense had been considered.

It was first of all a children's party as every Christmas party should be, but there were almost as many grown people asked besides, to enjoy the children's pleasure. Aunt Charlotte was there in her black velvet gown, and Mrs. Rice in her wedding dress,—everybody in fact looked their best.

Miss Elizabeth hardly knew herself with flowers and music and happy faces all about her, she almost forgot the pain at her heart, and her brother's contented smile paid her for all her struggle.

The tree which was in the library was a most beautiful sight when the lights were turned

down in the other rooms and the doors thrown open. The floor appeared to be covered with snow, and the tree was all in white and silver, blazing with candles.

After it had been sufficiently admired, Santa Claus came on the scene with a generous pack from which he distributed the most interesting white parcels tied with red ribbons. One of these which had on it "For Trolley, in care of Caro," contained the prettiest sort of a collar on which was a silver plate with his name.

Supper was served on small tables decorated in holly and red candles, and when this was over the children danced and played around the tree, while the older people strolled about the house or sat and talked.

"Have you had a good time Caro?" asked Walter, catching her hand as she danced by.

"Indeed I have," was her answer, "and I'm so much obliged for everything, especially Trolley's collar."

"I hope he will like it. I owe a great deal to Trolley."

"Why do you?" she asked.

"I doubt if you ever would have come to see me if he had not put it into your head."

"And then we shouldn't have had the party, should we? Here comes grandpa," she added. "Have you had a good time grandpa?"

"This has been a happy Christmas, Walter," the president said sitting down beside him.

"It has been to me. And I had not expected to have another happy one," Walter replied.

"What did Santa Claus bring you, grandpa?" Caro asked.

"Just what I most wanted," and Dr. Barrows smiled at Walter. "I can't tell you how much I thank you; I had come home rather discouraged."

"Please tell me what it is," begged his granddaughter.

"Only a piece of paper, Caro," said Walter.

"One that will help the seminary out of its difficulties," added the president.

"Do you mean money? That isn't interesting," laughed Caro. "I'll tell you what I think," she continued, shaking her finger at Walter, "I think you are a candle, a big one! Hasn't he brought us a great lot of cheer, grandpa?"

"He has indeed, my darling."

The young man's face flushed. "Whatever

I have done has brought me the most pleasure. I seem now not to mind as I did at first having to give everything up. I can even hear Charlie talk about the university, without thinking of my spoiled plans. I only want now to get what I can out of the present." Then after a moment's silence, he said with a smile, "I am not afraid of the dark any more."

"Did you try a candle?" Caro asked.

"Yes;" Walter answered, and Dr. Barrows understood. On that young life with its dark shadow, the light of love had shone, and a little candle had been the beginning of it.

So the Christmas party came to an end, and the guests went happily home through the snow.

## CHAPTER XII

### GOODBY

TROLLEY sat on the gate-post. If possible he was handsomer than ever, for the frosty weather had made his coat thick and fluffy, besides this he wore his new collar. His eyes were wide open to-day, and he looked out on the world with a solemn questioning gaze.

He had been decidedly upset in his mind that morning at finding an open trunk in Caro's room, and clothes scattered about on chairs and on the bed. Of course he did not know what this meant, but to the cat mind anything unusual is objectionable, and it made him unhappy. Finally he stretched himself in the tray, where Caro found him.

"You darling pussie!" she cried, "Mamma do look at him, I believe he wants to go home with us. I wish we could take him."

But Mrs. Holland said one little girl was all the traveling companion she cared for. "It

wouldn't do dear, he would be unhappy on the train," she added.

"I don't know what I should have done without him. He and my candle were my greatest comforts,—except grandpa," and Caro put her cheek down on Trolley's soft fur.

"What am I to do without my little candle?" her grandfather asked.

"Why you can have the cat," Caro answered merrily.

No wonder Trolley's mind was disturbed that morning with such a coming and going as went on,—people running in to say goodby, and Aunt Charlotte thinking every few minutes of something new for the traveler's lunch, tickling his nose with tantalizing odors of tongue and chicken.

It was over at last, trunks and bags were sent off, Aunt Charlotte was hugged and kissed and then Trolley had his turn, and the procession moved, headed by the president.

"Goodby Trolley; don't forget me!" Caro called, walking backwards and waving her handkerchief.

When they were out of sight Trolley went and sat on the gate-post and thought about it.

After a while he jumped down and trotted across the campus with a businesslike air as if he had come to an important decision. He took his way through the Barrows' orchard to the Grayson garden where there was now a well-trodden path through the snow.

Miss Grayson and her brother were sitting in the library. They had been talking about Caro when Walter glancing toward the window saw a pair of golden eyes peering in at him.

"There is Trolley," he said, and called Thompson to let him in.

Trolley entered as if he was sure of a welcome, and walking straight to Miss Elizabeth, sprang into her lap; and from this on he became a frequent visitor at the Graysons, dividing his time in fact about evenly between his two homes.

And thus an unfortunate quarrel which had disturbed the peaceful atmosphere of Charmington and separated old friends, was forgotten, and as the president often remarked, it was all owing to the candle and the cat.

L. of C.

THE END.

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# THE CANDLE AND THE CAT

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